



Circles

Circles is a community engagement initiative following a highly successful model already operating in Iowa with new initiatives beginning in ten other states including PA. The initiative has been effective in breaking down the barriers of class and race as it supports families who want to move from poverty to self sufficiency. Move the Mountain, the guiding agency located in Iowa, will actively support our Community Action agency as we engage the community to take ownership of eradicating poverty at a local level.

Circles initiatives have three primary goals:

- Invite the community to join the human service system in helping people out of poverty.
- Inspire and equip the community to eradicate poverty.
- Develop genuine and lasting relationships across social, economic and class lines with an intention to facilitate low-income people moving permanently out of poverty.



Circles are by definition, unique to each person and to each community sponsor. There are however, key elements that are important to make a Circles initiative successful. These are:

- Circles are not mentoring programs. "Circles" mean having 2 or more allies (recruited community members) who will support the participant on their journey toward self-sufficiency.
- Each participant works with the Circle to set goals towards self-sufficiency. The participant of the Circle is supported by the allies in assuming a leadership and decision-making role.
- A holistic approach is taken that focuses on helping participants completely out of poverty and addresses all the barriers inherent in that process. Fundamental supports like cars and cash assistance are made available (Acquired via grants or donations)
- Meetings focused on building community with people across class and cultural lines are held weekly. Free meals and childcare are provided.
- Intentional plan to change the community's mindset on poverty is included in the initiative.
- Participants are given the opportunity and expectation to give back to the community for the support they are receiving.

For more information contact:



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